

Guidance: Preparing A Project Grant Budget for The Rockefeller Foundation (RF)

Overview

The following guidelines only apply to project grants. A project grant supports a specific area of work or deliverable that will contribute to the strategic goals of an RF Funding Initiative.

RF does not require a specific budget format or template for project grants but, provides grantees with the guidelines below. If an organization does not have a standard budget format *The Rockefeller Foundation Project Budget Template (v2024)* can be used.

Important: *Regardless of the budget format, a budget will be required to report against expenditures as part of any grant awarded.*

General Budget Guidelines

- The budget details the type and amount of expenses to be incurred to complete the activities described in the grant proposal.
 - The budget must be in U.S. Dollars.
 - All expenses should be itemized.
 - RF encourages prospective grantees to budget for all direct project costs.
 - Budgets must be submitted in Microsoft Excel and include a summary tab as the first worksheet, if multiple worksheets are used. The summary tab should clearly identify additional worksheets that support the budget.
- RF requires a budget narrative as part of the proposal. In the budget narrative, describe and provide justification for each category in the budget.
- Please indicate the timeline applicable for the budget, ensuring it aligns with the timeline indicated in the proposal. The stated timeline will be the grant term, should the grant be awarded.
- If RF is being asked to contribute funding for a project that has other sources, please provide the following:
 - A total project budget, including a detailed list of expenses that RF would be asked to fund.
 - If applicable, indicate known sources of support (and amounts) for the remainder

of the budget and whether those other funds have been committed, requested, or are under discussion.

- Multi-year projects should be broken out by year.
 - Grants outside of an annual cycle (i.e., 18-month cycle) should detail the total budget and do not need to be broken out by year.

Line-Item Guidance

RF does not mandate the use of any specific line items or categories. The line items should be those the organization can easily report on during the life of the grant and should be based on costs and not activities. The following are the line items used most often in preparing budgets, with a brief description of what is generally expected to be included in them. Details may be enumerated either in the budget itself or in the budget narrative section of the proposal.

- **Staff Costs/Personnel:** While salaries may be confidential, at a minimum, the name and/or level of expected staff (i.e., principal, senior, junior) and a breakdown of each person's percentage of time allocated to the project should accompany any aggregate salary and/or fringe benefit line item. If a flat fee or task-based budget must be provided, a breakout of staff time toward each task must also be provided. Ideally the line item should include:
 - Each individual (with title) for whom salary support is requested (ideally listed individually).
 - The percentage of time each person will be devoting to the project.
 - An amount for salary (and benefits if needed) per person (or, at minimum, in aggregate.)
- **Consultants/Contracts/Collaborating Institutions:** Fees associated with a contract or service agreement for the benefit of the grantee to pursue the goals of their project. These costs should be included:
 - For contracts that comprise a significant amount of the budget (generally more than 20%), please provide a detailed budget justification for the contract. This detail should be included in the proposal's budget narrative and the rationale for support and benefit for the project of the contract.
 - If collaborating with other organizations, the budget should indicate each participating organization's costs separately. Please provide a detailed budget justification for each collaboration.
 - Please include the following, if this type of expense applies to your project:
 - The name of the person and/or entity, the type of contracted

- services being done, and the amount to be paid.
 - Indicate the geographic area of benefit for each individual or entity outside the organization annually.
- **Re-granting:** Re-granting or sub-granting entails the awarding of grant funds (all or part) to another organization for their execution and control in furtherance of the overall funded project. If re-granting applies to your project:
- Indicate the awarded amount for each re-grant recipient. If unknown, indicate the number of expected grants and the total to be awarded.
 - **Important:** *There are restrictions on the instances where RF can support re-granting to organizations and/or individuals that have not been determined to be public charities under Section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code or the equivalent of a US public charity. If these items are allocated to the budget, contact the Grants Manager assigned to this grant to inquire in advance.*
 - If a sub-grantee is named, please include how that sub-grantee was selected by the grantee.
 - Indicate the geographic area of benefit of each re-grant annually.
- **Conferences/Meetings/Convenings**
- Please include costs for the meeting facility, transportation, hotel, and meal expenses for meeting attendees.
 - All staff travel costs should be shown under Travel detail.
 - For travel expenses associated with an RF Bellagio convening, please coordinate with Tiller Global. *Please contact your Program Officer.*
 - **Important:** *Grant funds may not be used to pay for costs associated with RF staff traveling to or attending events funded through the grant and should not be included in the budget.*
 - Indicate the geographic area of benefit of each convening annually. Costs associated with a Bellagio convening should not be included in a grant budget.
- **Travel**
- Your organization's travel policy should be a guide when budgeting for travel costs. If the organization normally flies economy class for long flights, the organization should budget for economy travel. However, please note that generally, the maximum amount that RF will cover under a grant is business class airfare for cross-border trips in excess of five (5) hours (economy class for

all other travel).

- Indicate the origin and destinations for each trip, the number of staff traveling, and the amount to be paid for expenses. If providing an aggregate travel line item, it should be accompanied by a narrative breakdown of the people and frequency of anticipated trips.
- For travel expenses associated with an RF Bellagio convening, please coordinate with Tiller Global. *Please contact your Program Officer.*

- **Equipment**
 - List any equipment purchases necessary to carry out the project, including quantity and unit cost.
 - If equipment is rented or leased instead of purchased, please be clear on this point.
 - **Important:** *There are restrictions on the instances where RF can support equipment purchases to organizations that have not been determined to be public charities under Section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code or the equivalent of a US public charity.*
- **Office Expenses/Supplies**
 - Includes costs for telephone, fax, internet, postage, and courier services that will be charged directly to the project.
 - Rent is generally included in overhead/indirect costs (see below). However, if the organization must rent additional space specifically for the project to be funded, rent may be considered to be a direct project cost.
- **Communications/Publications**
 - Costs for the development, design, and production of materials for distribution may be included.
- **Measurement and Learning**
 - Include costs to measure (i.e., monitor and/or evaluate) what was learned and accomplished by the expenditure of funds, such as costs required to execute your measurement plan, conduct any learning activities you may undertake as a team, and/or produce internal and external reporting.
- **Other Direct Project Costs**
 - Please enumerate by providing a list of anticipated costs.
- **Overhead/Indirect Costs:** Overhead or indirect expenses generally include office rent, utilities, and maintenance; library, information, and technology support; personnel management (human resources) or other designated expenses as an allocated cost established by the organization. This cost is also sometimes referred to as an administrative/management fee by the organization.

- Beyond direct project costs, RF will consider providing overhead of up to 20 percent (up to 15% for universities) to those organizations that are eligible to receive overhead from RF under U.S. Internal Revenue Code regulations.
 - **Important:** *RF is unable to provide overhead/indirect costs to organizations that have not been determined to be public charities under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code or the equivalent of a U.S. public charity. In no cases may overhead be provided to a for-profit organization. If there are questions about whether overhead will be permitted for your grant, please be in touch with RF's Office of Grants Management.*
- **Reserve Fund/Contingent Fund**
 - A reserve or contingent amount is allowed for unanticipated expenses within the awarded grant amount that may arise outside of the grantee's control. Amounts should be reasonable and discussed in advance with the Program Officer for the proposed grant. Reserve funds are typically held by RF and only paid, in whole or in part, on receipt of a financial report showing that some or all of the funds are needed.
 - **Important:** *RF is unable to support a Reserve Fund/Contingent Fund to organizations that have not been determined to be public charities under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code or the equivalent of a U.S. public charity. In no cases may overhead be provided to a for-profit organization. If there are questions about whether overhead will be permitted for your grant, please contact your Program Officer.*